

# The Register

An artistic painting of tulips. In the upper left, a large purple tulip is partially visible. Below it, two yellow tulips are in full bloom, their petals outlined in dark brown. The background is a deep blue with soft, painterly textures. The overall style is expressive and modern.

Spring 2003







# *The Register*

Spring 2003

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# *The Register*

Spring 2003

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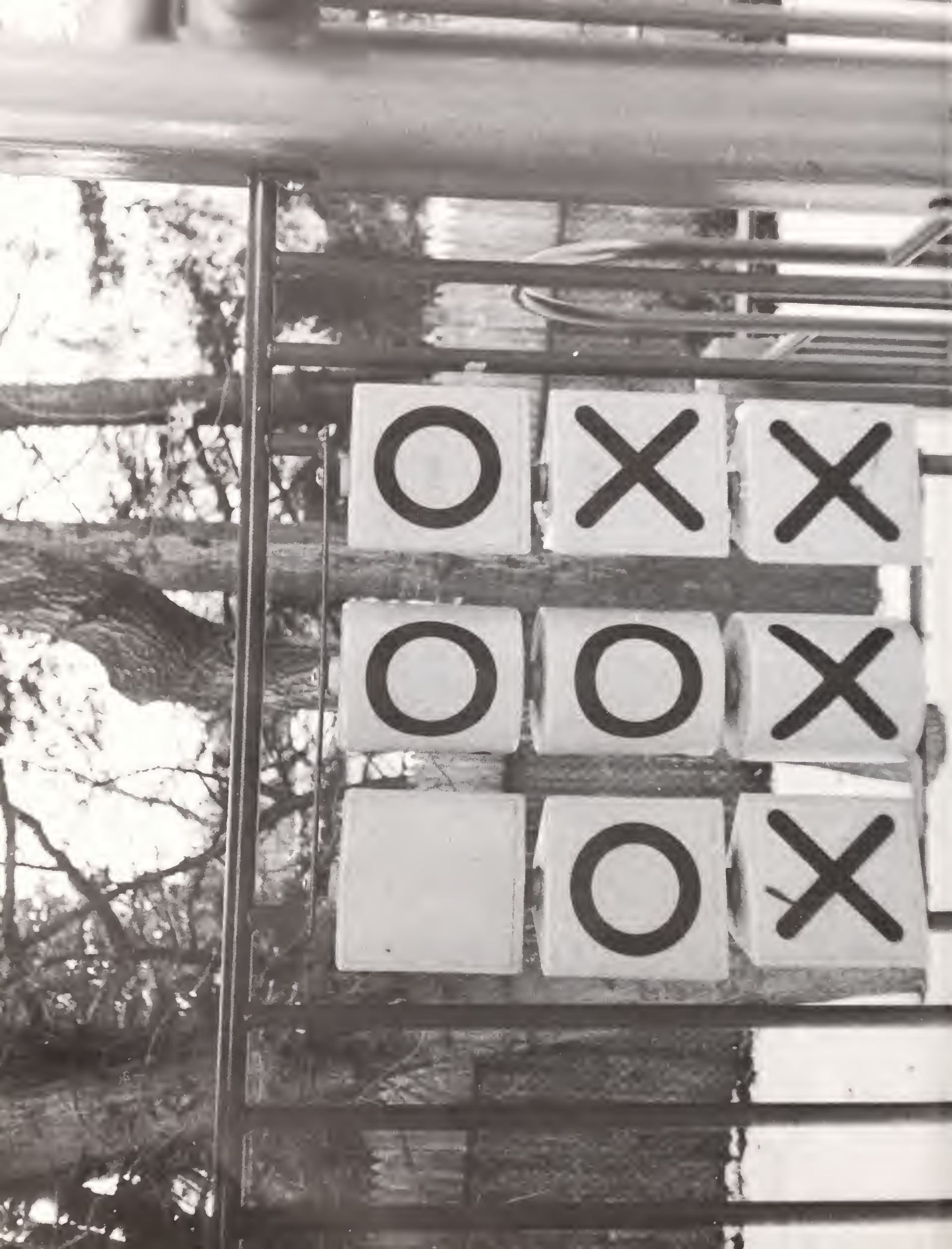
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i n s p i r a t i o n  
S o n n e t

Do tell, sweet mystery, what are your ways?  
Because at night I wonder, in place of rest,  
Until I feel the sunlight's rising rays  
Warm my face, yet shine on me in jest.  
What power? To steal undaunted through  
My trusted fortress, past the guards that stand,  
Even slip unseen beside me, where I view  
The hollow world, and softly take my hand?  
Impossible!—Yet here you are, smiling  
So kind, that stern suspicion passes away;  
But when I ask you how, you smile beguiling,  
And with your faery touch, you seem to say  
'You cannot catch me, but let go the rue;  
I do what I like, and chose to come to you.'

On Graduation

I had a good time  
Being out there with you  
And being liked  
You were an eye-catcher and we looked good together  
So I know you'll talk about me if I become famous one day  
How you were with me and I was yours  
I shouldn't complain, if I didn't know better  
But I wish you had gone easier  
On perfume:  
You smelled like a French whore  
And it rubbed off on me

—Atti  
Viragh, I

## Tonight I Had to Kill Him

I walked into my room tonight and the first thing I did was to go to the full-length mirror on the back of my bathroom door. I looked at the man that I had allowed part of myself to virtually become, a part that I could call on at will when I heard my cue to do so. Eighty years old, still handsome, sarcastic with just a touch of bitterness. This man – although the product of my own knowledge of human nature, superb direction and energy from those around me, and the expert application of aging makeup and hair whitener – this man was a living person, far different from the one whose body he borrowed, someone with his own set of emotions and experiences and even a sense of humor.

And tonight, I had to kill him.

Perhaps the hardest thing for an actor at the end of a run of performances is leaving behind his character. Knowing that this is probably the last time he wears that costume, the last time he says those lines. No more gravelly voice, no more sardonic stubbornness. No more unspoken dialogue with the maid, no more annoying little grandson asking for money. No more chicken and beans that we'd been using for four weeks.

For four months I had spent my time and energy creating Grandpa, transforming him from a series of words in the script into a real human being. For four months, the play had been the thing. And tonight, we had performed it for the last time.

It didn't really hit me until I was standing in front of my mirror looking at Grandpa glaring back at me. The shower water was already running; as soon as I stepped in, the white would flow out of Grandpa's hair and drip down his – my – chest like milk. The painted-on wrinkles would melt away, and with them the years that separated us. I would come out of the shower left with only myself. I would still be able to call on the part of me that was Grandpa. But I wouldn't, because there would be no reason to do so. Eventually that part of me would grow smaller and smaller until I could not call on it anymore.

But then, Grandpa spoke to me. I don't remember thinking the words, or even moving my lips, but I heard the words clearly as they left the lips of the man in the mirror.

"I'm not going to be gone," he told me in his dear, harsh voice, "I'm just going away for a while. You might need me again, and sooner than you think. You already said you'd bring me to the party at the end of the year. What about that?"

"You're right," I responded, my words said out loud just as his had been. "Then maybe this isn't goodbye," I paused, and a smile came over both our faces.

Suddenly. I could see them all standing there, waiting to greet him. Characters who still lived in me, characters I had written off as dead and gone: Uncle Murray, Judge Hawthorne, Roger the butler. Mr. Thaddeus, the announcer, the professor, the former bank president. And my old favorite, Mr. Anthony Kirby, Sr.

"Well, Grandpa," I said in a voice that was mine and his at the same time, "it's time to go."

"Just for now," he said as I stepped into the shower. "Just for now."

- Marcus Stacey, I





# **NOTHING is FOREVER...**

My family. They were magnificent people, but I guess I got boring after a while. I remember being taken out of my package, a new yellow rubber ducky, eager to be loved. I was loved. I was John's favorite thing for five years – five marvelous, fantastic years. We went everywhere together. I saw to it that John was always a good little boy, never a troublemaker. He was *my* boy.

Mrs. Thomas, the lady across the street, gave me to John on his fourth birthday. It was a hot and sticky day in August, a day where no one did anything and just lounged around. Mrs. Thomas had handed me to John around noontime, when he was just finishing up his lunch. I looked up at John. He was a cute, little blue-eyed, blond-haired kid. He had some freckles peeking out from beneath his nappy hair. At first John was slightly disappointed that he didn't get the GI Joe action figure that he wanted, but I squeaked, and John's face became a light beacon. John splashed around in his little wading pool all afternoon and evening with me – he was that delighted.

I remember taking baths with him, having underwater sea adventures where I would save the drowning boat. He took me for a ride on his first bike. He even celebrated my birthday, if you can call the day he got me a birthday. We played together in the sandbox. I was the pharaoh of ancient Egypt. I was John's best friend. I had never had more fun in my short-lived life.

It was when John was nine that things started snowballing downhill. John had never introduced me to his friends before, but one-day he came home with an assignment to bring in his favorite toy. The next day, we proudly stood up in front of John's third-grade class. John told the story of how on his fourth birthday, he got me as a present. When we were done with our presentation, the whole class just sat in silence. I think it was shock. I'm not quite sure.

However, lunch was no comparison. The silence that had overcome the classroom no longer existed. All of the kids, boys and girls, gathered around us. Tommy jabbed John in the ribs and called him "wuss." John said nothing. Suzie yelled, "Even I don't play with rubber duckies anymore!" John said nothing. Mark called him a girl. Still John said nothing. He just stood there, in the courtyard, with a blank face. I couldn't tell what he was thinking. All I knew was, it wasn't happy.

After school John took me in his room and just looked at me. He didn't say anything. He just gave me this look, a soulless, mysterious look. That night when it came time for his bath, he didn't bring me down to the tub with him. His father brought me down and told John he had forgotten me. "No," John said, tossing me aside.

When his mother came in to check on him, her foot brushed me to the side, where I sat miserably in the corner. I was found, and John tossed me into the basket of forgotten toys. The attic was cold and wet. I missed the warmth of John's room, the sound of John's breathing at night. I was all alone.

That was seven years ago. The next time I saw daylight John was sixteen. The Thomases were moving. Mrs. Thomas was the first face I saw. She called John over and asked him if he remembered me. John nodded and told her to throw me out. Mrs. Thomas looked shocked, still, after all those years. I guessed she couldn't believe I was going to leave the family. Mrs. Thomas gently placed me in the box to be donated to charity. They were leaving me forever. I once thought that love conquered all and that love lasted an eternity. I see now that nothing is forever.

Stephanie Chan, V





# Betrayal [JASON AND MEDEA]

A woman weaves. Her nimble fingers fly back and forth between the spindle and the wheel, flawlessly interlinking threads of multicolored revenge and poison into a dizzying pattern of death. Pain, vengeance, bitterness, hatred, anger, scorn, righteousness blend and flow, revolving round and round in a rainbow, to settle into her hands in a mound of fluid cloth. Now, she remembers.

~~~

She fell in love with him when she was a young woman. Barely an adult, she had been smitten by the golden stranger at first glance. She had not been the famed sorceress that she would become in her later years, but an amateur witch. She had labored, prayed and sacrificed, danced arcane rituals to the goddesses, and murdered to gain power. And when her sister came to her, she agreed to help the man she would grow to love and hate.

She still remembered that dawn. It had been a hard night, brewing the drugs and herbs, blending the precious stones with the potion. When she was done, she gave the vial to the stranger who stole her heart. Before the temple of Hecate, the mighty goddess whom she served, he swore that her name would be honored forever in Iolcus, his rightful kingdom, and he would love her until the end of days. Like a naïve child, she had believed him.

~~~

*The cloth is a work of art. Her mother would be proud of the way she wove intricate designs into the material. The soft fabric is stained red from her blood, dusky hues of purple and coral pink, dusty grey and dark gold. One might say that it is a sunrise, a dawn, but she knows this to be a setting sun, the sign of someone who is soon to descend into the Underworld. Silently, she sews, endeavoring to make a robe for her... successor.*

~~~

And she did worse things. She had killed her own brother, tearing apart flesh from bone, casting the bloody mess into the waters as the *Argo* sailed from Crete. She had pleaded with her aunt Circe to purify them, groveling in the dark palace of Aeaëa. She had endured her aunt's enraged shrieks, after Circe learned of her crime, and fled from the island with her lover in terror. All for the promises of glory and honor and love he had made to her.

What a fool she had been!

~~~

*The design is nearly finished. She has cut and sewn the pieces of cloth together. All edges are neatly hemmed and cut. She has only to finish the sleeves, plain and unadorned. But her thoughts betray her and stray back to her past. Back to the journey she embarked on as a young woman a lifetime ago. The journey that took her across sea and desert, through hardships and toil, with the prince who promised her the world in her palm.*

~~~

Through mistakes and trials, anger and misfortune, she had not regretted her impulsive decision. Yet, it was one she paid for dearly. She fled in disgrace from her homeland, where she had been worshipped as a witch of immense power, youthful but wise. Fiendless and homeless, she clung to him as a dying one would cling to his last shred of hope. She had



not ceased to love him, this man who was wily and strong but weak and doubtful at the same time, spontaneous and joyful, deep and thoughtful. He often talked of his love for her, his country, and the kingdom that was rightfully his. She had done nearly everything.

The final plot was the murder of Pelias. She had convinced his daughters, unsuspecting and innocent, to murder their own father. Only the unconvinced eldest sister watched her younger sisters slaughter their father. When the dismayed siblings realized what had happened before their very eyes, they broke down in terror and grief filled the air. Only Alcestis, dry-eyed and vengeful, had hissed at the sorceress, cursing her. *You are an evil witch who will pay dearly for what you have done, for the unjust way in which you treated others; may the misery you've caused others be repaid threefold.* The girl spoke with venom in every word. It still haunted her at night, when she awoke from his embrace with a feeling of insecurity, as if she had gone through Tartarus itself for nothing. Who was this girl, then? This fair daughter of Creon whom her lover had abandoned her to marry? This woman who was to become his wife, while she who had borne him two sons, through fortune and adversity, would be exiled. She desperately wanted to know, but it was a pity it would never come to pass, for the message she had sent to the palace contained a most lethal meaning indeed.

~~~

*Now, it needs only the potion. The potion she has brewed for days. Blood, black roses, poison, venom. It is all in the cauldron. Solemnly, she dips the finished robe into the hissing and bubbling mess. Steadily, she lifts the cloth out once more, and it seems a transformation has come over it. It is shining with an otherworldly light, silver and green. But within moments, the light dies down, and it is cool to the touch. The colors have faded and changed into a virginal white, the perfect color for a wedding robe. Satisfied, she folds it and places it inside a box. It is sent to the palace, and now she has no more to do.*

*She waits silently. As the hours pass, there is no movement until a chariot arrives. A handsome man rushes in, his face contorted by anger and grief, but the expression fades slowly as he sees her. He curses her, solemnly. The servants of the house watch in terror as their master and former mistress quarrel in anger. Suddenly, she flees into the deep recesses of the house, and the disorienting sound of wailing children fills the air. She ascends the stairs again and he can see them, the rapidly shifting silhouettes of his former wife pursuing the youngest son behind the glass window. Aghast, he is helpless and can only watch as his wife advances, a knife in her hand, malevolent and secretive. Swiftly, her shadow grabs the smaller figure and slashes its throat. Instantly, dark red lifeblood splatters in a wide arc on the glass. The servants faint, and he is stricken.*

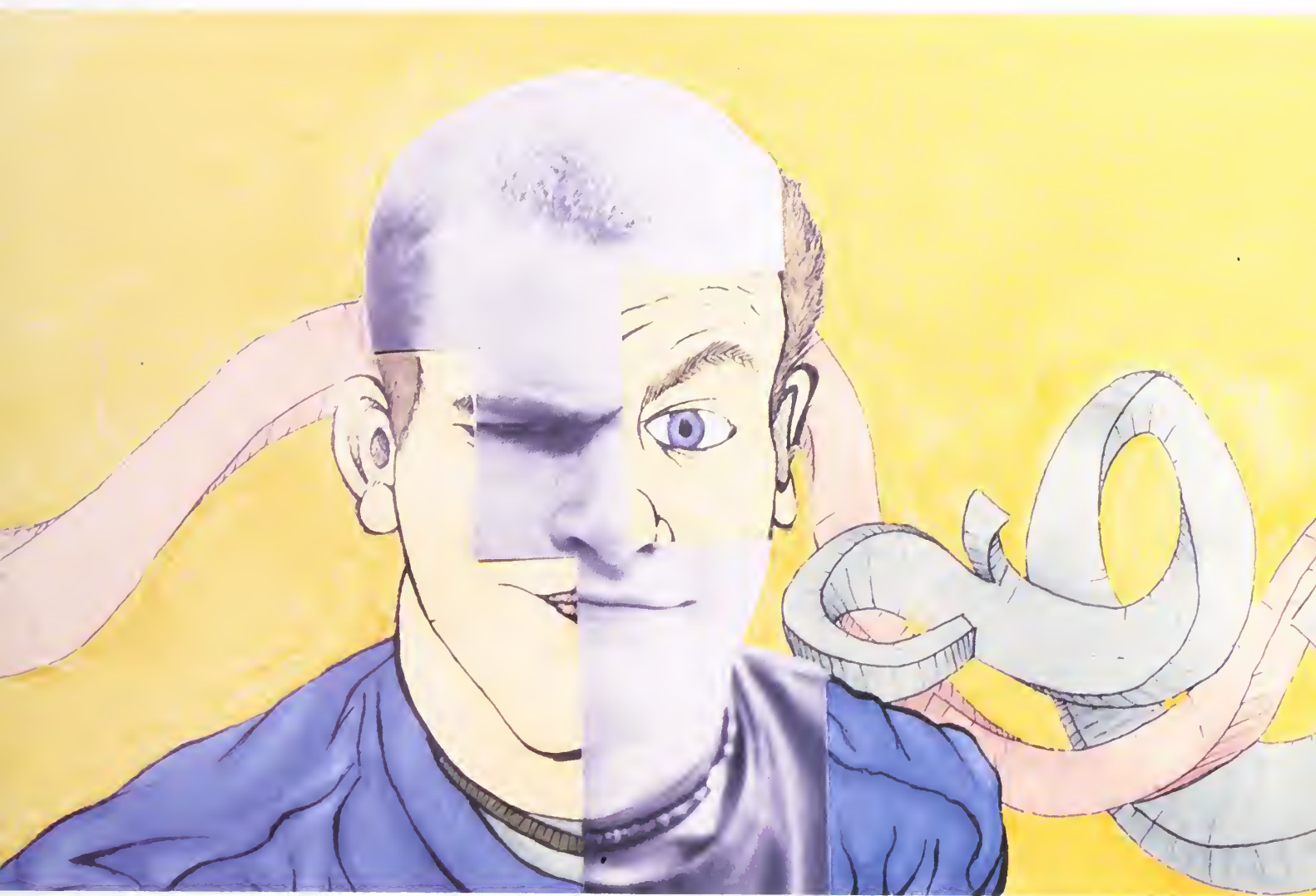
*An eternity later, she reemerges. Her eyes are vacant, her hands bloody. Her one arm grips the youngest son, his arms swinging lifelessly and his throat gaping open. The other hand is entangled in the scalp of the oldest son. Without a word, she lays them down carefully at her grieving husband's feet. She whispers a goodbye, walking away from the carnage that had once been her children. She is no longer a powerful sorceress of lore, but a lone-some mother and wife. No servant dares to bar her way as she walks out of the house. She is once more free.*

-Yucong Ma, IV



Emily Lume 2023





## Endure for Now this **Fearful,**

Endure for now this fearful, frigid clime,  
Awaiting days when warmer winds will gust,  
For soft, sweet zephyrs come in their own time.

As steely bells of winter sharply chime  
Suppress your inner yearning, springtime lust.  
Endure for now this fearful frigid clime.

Here restless longing is a sinful crime  
And patience, through this harsh cold wait, a must,  
For soft, sweet zephyrs come in their own time.

While fools lament the season's slush and slime,  
The sager men, who tacit watch, just  
Endure for now this fearful frigid clime.

In all things show this wisdom, so sublime.  
Immutable feelings, themselves adjust,  
For soft, sweet zephyrs come in their own time.

When enmity is strongest, in its prime,  
Her frozen heart will melt, in that I trust,  
Endure for now this fearful, frigid clime,  
For soft, sweet zephyrs come in their own time.

*F*  
*r*  
*i*  
*g*  
*i*  
*d*  
  
*C*  
*l*  
*i*  
*m*  
*e*

-Gregory Halloran, I



It happened in math class, at the start of the day  
When all blessed children moaned, sobbed in dismay  
Of Neos and Cramers the talk went on then  
Of systems and solvings, what you can't and you can.  
She sat in a haze state, head down on her hand,  
Waiting in dullness for R1 to end.  
Yet the clock went on crawling, but just at the time  
When all hope was lost—there heard was a chime.  
A sweet little tinkle, a "sorry" from God,  
And *whoosh!* came a wizard, with a sword-looking rod.  
"I've come here to save you!" he cried to the class  
(For rhyme's sake we'll say he was made of glass).  
The teacher saw through him, but she noticed the kids  
Sigh a breath of relief. "That's, like, *great!*" cried the ditz.  
"Shut up!" someone muttered, but it was too late  
The monster, suspecting, bared her teeth in a grate.  
"What goes here!?" screamed Teacher, and hitched up her skirt  
And scaring them brainless, stormed up, *quite berserk*.  
"Who dare utter 'great' here? Look *relieved* in my room?  
When I find what's up here, I'll send on thee doom!  
I'll strangle you silly with matrices squared  
Till I know very surely who feel happy here dared.  
Now fess up! What's coming? Or I'll stop all the time,  
And till eternity's end, you'll be mine mine Mine MINE!"  
They looked at the wizard, scared up to their ears  
I mean—he's a wizard! He'd vanquish their fears!  
And surely—he nodded, then chuckled and winked  
And gelled up his hair, and red shoe heals clinked  
"Alrighty!" he shouted, "When I say 'duck', duck!  
We'll blow off this math-witch, be with us the luck!"  
The teacher, however, continued to boil,  
And all of the smart kids knew their plan this could foil.  
"Why, nothing, Magistra!" said some boy from the back  
She reeled then upon him, and BOOM! BOTTLE! THWACK!  
Alas, no more boy there, the teacher just smiled  
And a girl, sitting neatly, thought 911 ought be dialed.  
But the phone lines were cut, as would soon be their throats  
(They imagined the papers: "Math Class Kills Loads!")  
When finally, wizard (who'd been taking his time)  
Shouted "Duck, little children!" and again came the chime.  
And BOOM! went the math room, and THRODDLE! the door  
And CRASH! went the ceiling, and OH, DAMN! the floor.  
"I'm melting!" went teacher and "YES!!!" cried the rest  
Of previous lessons, *this one was the best!*  
Alas, too quick passed the glory, too fast the revenge  
You see, kids, the bell rang—t'was time now for French.

AN OCCURRENCE

Alina Fomovska, IV





# How to BE A MODEL Young Woman

It is a wonderful thing to be a Young Woman today in America. The freedom, the possibility, the opportunity and the joy of living for women today are constantly being displayed around us. However, here at Conformity Inc. it occurred to us that there might be a few confused young women out there in need of some simple guidance about how to be the right kind of young woman. The following are some helpful hints about how to be the best young woman you can be.

First and foremost, be beautiful. A man once said, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." He was a man; obviously he didn't know what he was talking about. We know that beauty is really in the eye of the movie star, news anchor, or fashion magazine. It's important for the Model Young Woman to keep up with current events, such as what hairstyles are in this month. Also, be thin. It's not that hard; food is overrated. Be well dressed. Make sure not to wear anything that is too colorful, not colorful enough, orange, too big, too tight, too risqué, not risqué enough, too boyish, not pretty enough, old, linty, was at one time your mother's, something your mother would wear, something your mother likes, or something your mother has been near. Know how to apply makeup, and do so on a regular basis (specifically, several times a day). Deny the existence of blemishes, birthmarks, pores and other distinguishing characteristics such as fingerprints. Own a pair of shoes for each week that you have lived (none, I repeat, none of these should be especially comfortable). Be graceful. Make sure that your ears, feet, nose, and hands are appropriately small. Have nice hair, good teeth, long eyelashes, perfect breasts, and a mellifluous voice. Have good posture. Smell like flowers, and always remember to moisturize. Nobody will love a girl with chapped skin.

Be smart. If you can't be smart, carry a sensible yet stylish pair of glasses that makes you look smart. Intelligence is essential to the success of a Young Woman. Of course, by intelligence we mean good grades. The Model Young Woman gets As and, so as not to seem an overachiever, perhaps the occasional B, but Cs, Ds, and Fs are unacceptable. If necessary, you can use "special" means to achieve your As, but don't get caught - you have a reputation to maintain. Do not "brag" about your grades, but make sure everyone knows how well you do. Be well liked by all your teachers. Be responsible, be dependable, and don't ever be late.

Have a Special Talent. You should be versatile and good at many things, because well-roundedness is essential to being a Model Young Woman, but one talent in particular is always good. It should be something impressive and interesting. Be a good singer, dancer, or artist, or perhaps play a sport (but nothing so rough as football; swimming or yoga would do better). Make sure your talent is noble and attractive.

Be assertive, but in a quiet way. DO NOT be overly assertive, lest someone take you for aggressive or argumentative. Model Young Women are nice and friendly; they do not argue, and their opinions are always fair and agreeable to everyone.

It's best to have only a few opinions, and to know when to keep them to yourself. Be civil. Always be calm and placid, and put others at ease; never yell. Model Young Women don't provoke people and they don't provoke thought. Under no circumstances should a Model Young Woman make someone uncomfortable. It isn't polite. Passion is not a part of the Model Young Woman's agenda.

Be sweet. Smile, and be friendly and welcoming. If possible, be cute. Like babies – this is a must. Model Young Women ALWAYS like babies. If you find something wrong with babies, hide it. When encountering a baby, coo at it, condescend to it, blather at it for several minutes while tickling its cute naked baby feet. We don't care if you don't actually like babies. You might detest them. Maybe you find them repulsive. Maybe a baby viciously attacked your grandmother. But if you're going to be the Model Young Woman, you better suck it up and kootchie-coo, Missy.

Have a mild sense of humor, but don't be too biting or sarcastic, because that might offend someone. Dark comedy is not comedy to the Model Young Woman. Be politically correct. Model Young Women do not offend people of Other Cultures and Back-grounds. (They just avoid them.) Don't be vulgar, and never swear. Keep your humor clean. Don't acknowledge death, heartbreak, anger, drugs, or sex. Don't be sexual. Don't flirt. Operate under the pretense that the cute babies you love emerge from your navel. Never say that word. You know what word we're talking about. We don't have to say it. Model Young Women don't even think about this word. We shouldn't have to say it. Don't play dumb with us. You won't make us say it. All right, fine, just this once: *vagina*. NEVER say *vagina*. If you do, wash your mouth out with soap and go kiss a baby.

Have a boyfriend. Single girls just aren't Model Young Woman material. You should be attracted to boys; if not, pretend you are. If you've followed the directions so far it shouldn't be too hard to find a boy, but there's no need to be picky. Any boyfriend will do, as long as he's athletic, taller than you, "intelligent," and handsome. Then, simply wait for one to ask you out. NEVER ask him; that's just a little too aggressive. Once you've procured a boy, make sure you go out on a date every Saturday night, and always make sure he's dressed well. Buy him cute little presents to remind him how much you love him. Boys love things like ties. Hold hands, but don't be too close. Make sure your parents like him. Be possessive. Every once in a while, make him a little jealous to be sure he still cares; but don't you dare let him near any other girls. After a sufficient amount of time passes, break up with him, and find a new boy. It's important to have variety.

You can be a Model Young Woman; it is within your reach. Simply be attractive; get good grades; be liked and accepted; don't offend people or get angry, never make waves; don't be too assertive and don't acknowledge your sexuality; make sure you date, but don't get too attached. Be nice. People will approve of you, and you'll set yourself on a path to success. In the event that you are not typically attractive, not mildly good at everything, disliked by some, aggressive, sexual, passionate, angry or emotional, attracted to women or not interested in dating, don't give up hope. Keep trying to follow our guidelines; we assure you that after you've surrendered everything that sets you apart, you will be too successful, too "happy," too popular, or simply too confused to care.

-Lily Mooney , II



## E C H O E S FROM THE NEW YORKER:

### *Letter from Baghdad,*

*April MMIII*

Naked child

Legs smooth

Torso black

Near biceps

Arms charred

black

Catheter tube

attached to

his penis

Age 12

Wounded in

Rocket attack on

S.E. part of Baghdad

Ali

lost his

Mother

Father

Six brothers & sisters

Home destroyed

In attack

One family 8

persons killed

SOON BEFORE

Ali & his family

Brought to hospital

Difficult to see what was once

Human Beings

Cloth stuck to their bodies

Bold red-&-green fabric with

Flowers

Straw mixed in

Ali's Mother

Face cut in half

-as if done with a giant knife

Her mouth

-yawning open

Father & sister

-a pile of charred

Body parts

Brother's body-body all there

From the nose up Head gone-

Mouth - openlike

Someone screaming.

ALI NOW IN HOSPITAL ROOM

His aunt in Black

Sits with him

Grey blanket lowered

Naked chest

Bandaged stumps

And

His Face

Eyes

Hazel green flecked

Long Eye lashes

Feels no pain

Those deeply burned

Nerves destroyed

Thinks of nothing

Remembers

6th grade

Favorite subject

Geography Likes

Volley Ball

Soccer

Cries, "Bush is a criminal and fighting for oil!"

Said

When asked what

He wanted to be when he grew up,  
"an officer."

his Aunt cried out

INSHALLAH

If Allah wills it.

-Joseph Ralph Ruffino,

World Language Department

# Regeneratio Saecularis Phoenicis

[Centennial Rebirth of the Phoenix-Six Haikus]

Barrens saturate  
With the musk of death, fair day  
Raped by ruthless night.

Darkness

Stirrings

Little ere light, dark  
Terrene Scar: dormant cinders -  
Aglow, Clandestine.

Bathed as in fetal  
Blood, the Phoenix, ripping from  
Fallow ash: Reborn.

Reincarnate

Phoenix  
Burning

Proud breast arched, blooming  
Crimson as the flames of an  
Incandescent dawn.

Searing soul, a star  
In the East: brightly burning,  
Screaming in its flight.

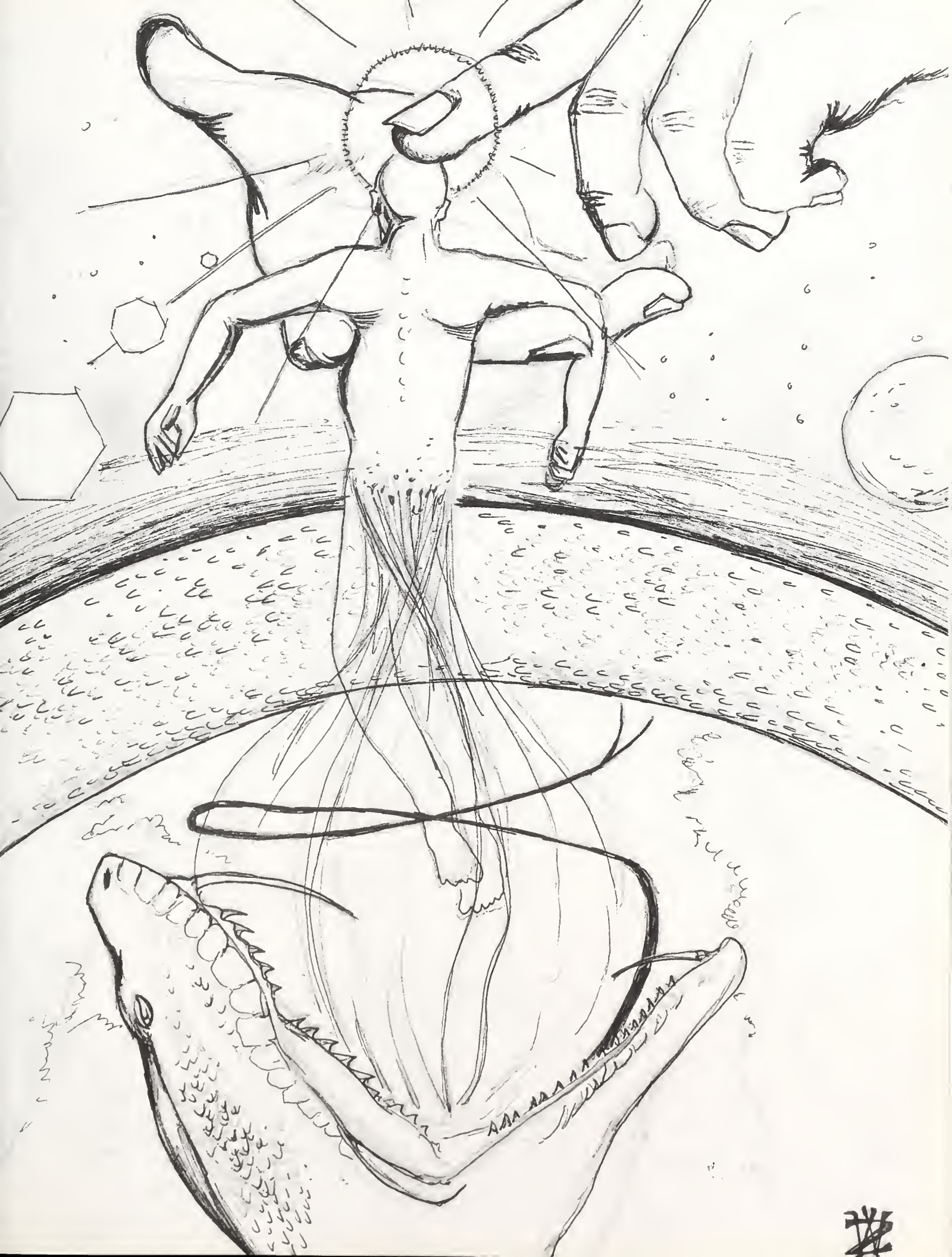
Phoenix at  
Dawn

Phoenix  
in Flight

Ablaze, the Feral  
Messiah of light: Rising,  
Rising like the sun.

Mary Hong, IV





# Blackout

In an instant, everything is gone. The lights snap off, the radio hushes, and the television goes blank. All becomes lost in the darkness in perfect synchrony. After a moment of panic, the sound of scraping is heard from somewhere in the sea of black. The scrapes are followed by a small sound like gusts of wind competing to squeeze into a crack. When the match, with the fire glowing at its tip, touches the wick, another fire is born. This fire, confined within the candle, brings comfort, serenity, and a glow of light to the infinite layers of black sheets.

The light caresses the wall, adding new warmth to the paleness. As the candle flickers, the dancing shafts turn the wall into the fluttering wings of an agitated moth. A soft scent of vanilla permeates the air. In moments, the pungent odor is transformed into a sweet aroma by a single cylindrical mass of wax. I slip my finger back and forth through the flame. It licks me with its tongue of warmth, and it feels as if my finger has been quickly engulfed by warm jelly. When blown on, the small, yet resilient luminosity fights back in protest, releasing the sound of quiet fireworks. As it quivers rapidly under the pressure of a breath, it sounds as if wind were beating at bed sheets hanging from a clothesline. Finally, when the light is freed from the sharp steam of air, it straightens proudly. The teardrop of fire melts that which surrounds it, and soon there is a puddle of tears with a blackened wick at its center.

Suddenly, all life comes back. The lights snap on, the radio blares, and the television flashes. In unison, the garish brightness finds all that was lost. The candle's flame, which a moment before was the only source of light, becomes pathetic in comparison to the radiant rays of electricity. After the moment of revitalization, the reverberation of blowing is heard. The blowing is followed by a final blast of fireworks. A meandering trail of slender gray cloud drifts upwards. The strong fragrance of vanilla mixed with the smell of smoke pushes through and intoxicates the air. This is all that remains of small power of light and heat, formed with the single strike of a match and gone in a second with a swift breath.

- Christine Yoo, V



# Wolfing

Elspeth, a most charming young girl, beloved of everyone in her town, was skipping happily down the road to her grandmother's house. A cloak of brilliant crimson was slung over her shoulders, and a basket full of delicious food hung from her arm. She was smiling, and munching on an apple.

After a few minutes of skipping, Elspeth (being, after all, a *young* girl) grew tired and sat down by the side of the road, pulling a chicken sandwich out of the basket to nibble on. Presently, a large wolf sidled out of the bushes and approached her.

"Little girl," he growled. "Little girl, what are you eating?"

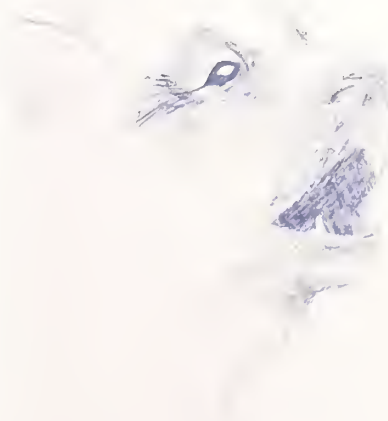
"I'm eating a chicken sandwich from this basket," Elspeth responded perkily. "Would you like one?"

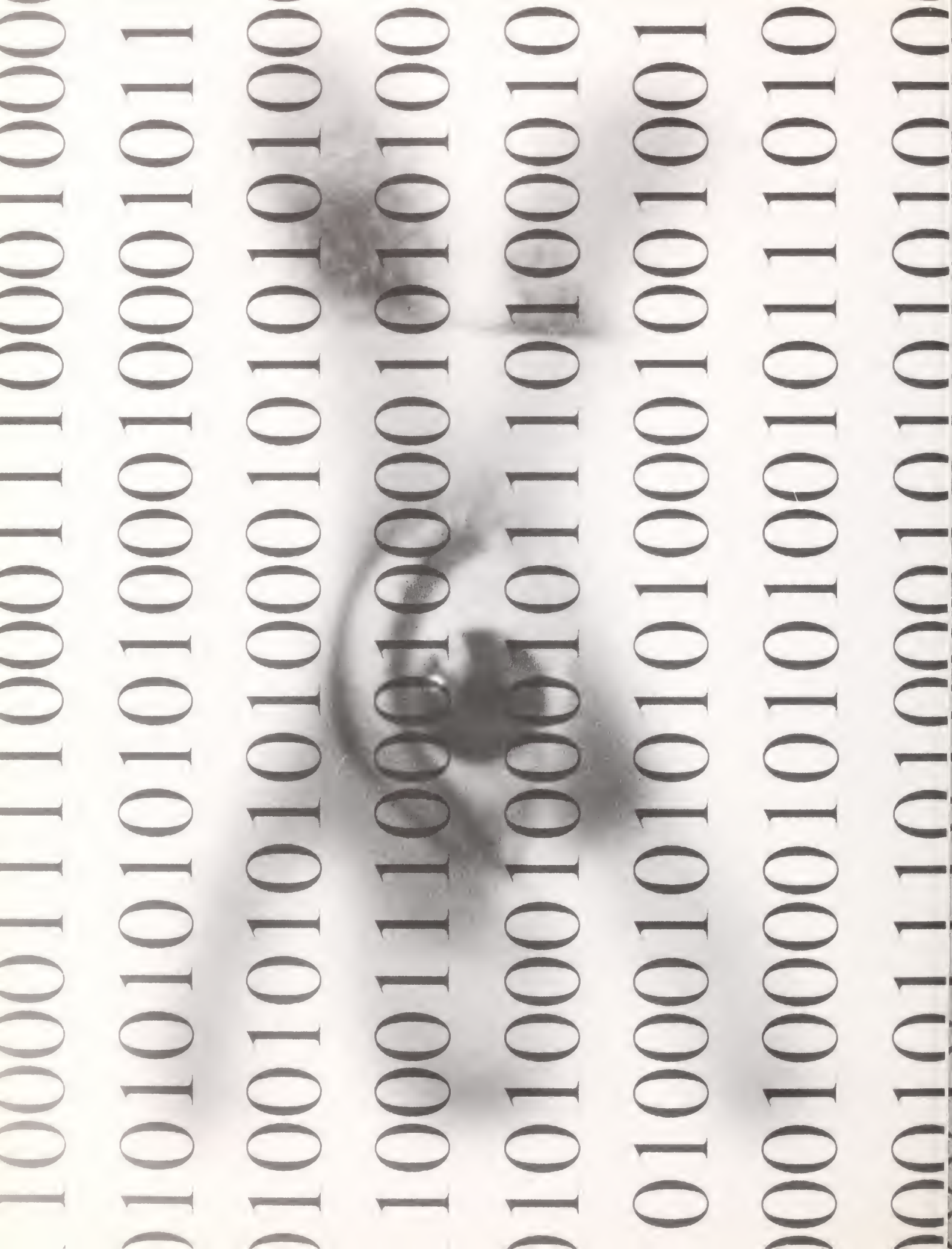
"But little girl, aren't those sandwiches for your grandmother?" the wolf asked huskily.

"Well, yes, but she's old, and won't eat much, and will die soon anyway. Besides, I was hungry."

The wolf pondered this for a moment, and then ate Elspeth in two bites. "Self-centered little wench," he snarled, because after all, wolves have a strong sense of pack, even if humans don't.

- Joni Dames, II







# MIR. Jack JOHNSON

Jack Johnson was making his last run of the night. It was a Ford Athena, over on the North Side. The driver had called in a few minutes ago. Night calls in Heartwood Port were unusual. It was a commercial port, and most business went on during business hours. Jack guessed that the owner was a businessman who had missed his flight, and settled for a shuttle. Those rental shuttles were ancient, not made for traveling more than a few light years at a time.

Jack decided he would let Simtwo handle the actual shuttle repair. He hated to let a robot do his work, but tonight, he was too tired to fight. When he had first started working with Simtwo, he had only let it do office work. But now, Simtwo did most of the work, except for driving the tow. Jack still didn't trust a robot to drive in the heavy traffic around the port. The robots did fine work, but Jack couldn't help feeling that there was a certain personal touch that only a human could give customers.

Faintly, Jack remembered a time when humans still did manual labor. Lately, his memories had been fuzzy. He had heard that too many rejuvenations can do that to a person. Maybe tomorrow he would call the doctor. He couldn't remember the last time he had seen a doctor.

Now, he thought, he must be one of the only human repairmen left. He should have retired long ago and let Simtwo take over. Everyone else he had known in the business had retired long ago.

This is what Jack was thinking of as he pulled up to the Athena. It was ancient. Once upon a time, Jack thought, it must have been red. Now the paint was chipped, and there was more corrosion than color. There was no residual smoke that usually signaled a breakdown. But, he reasoned, maybe the driver hadn't called it in right away. Although it was an odd thing to do, Jack knew that some customers tried to fix vehicles themselves before calling in a repairman.

The window rolled down, and a white haired man stuck out his head. He smiled at Jack.

"You're Jack Johnson?"

"Yes, sir. I hope you read that off the side of the truck, because I sure didn't tell you."

The man laughed. "You know Jack, most robots don't have your kind of personality."

It was Jack's turn to laugh. "Well, sir, that's because I'm not a robot. I'm probably the last human repairman around."

The man smiled and leaned a little further out the window. "Jack, would you like to know a secret?"

Jack shrugged. He really didn't want to get stuck late at night talking to a strange customer, but there was nothing he could do about it now.

"Then lean over, I'll tell you."

Jack leaned over. The man put his face close to his ear, as if to whisper. Then, with his left hand, he reached over and pushed a small button behind Jack Johnson's ear.

The light in Jack's eyes went out, and he slumped down into his seat.

"You're just one of them," the man whispered. "I made you."

Molly Higgins, III

## Certainly Not *I*

The smiling sun, gleaming with an adamantine warmth through the wispy remnants of waning dawn's mist, the cheerful applause of the tree branches swaying gently in the breeze, and the palpable crispness of that idyllic fall morning permeated my consciousness on that eventful day. Who could argue with the blessing of nature, her unspoken, implicit promise of utopia? Certainly not I. Blissfully unaware of the cares of life, of the mutability of man, of all that was in store for me, I clung tightly to my mother's arm, pressing against her in utter exultation. I was going back to school! The idle leisure of the seemingly endless summer had weighed heavily on my mind; from beginning to end my fondest wish was to bask in the warmth of friendship and praise I had so clearly associated with my school. Oblivious of the future, I planted a quick kiss on my mother's cheek and skipped merrily up the cold cement ramp towards the entrance.

Turning a blind eye to the yellowed plastic windows that had long since ceased to be transparent, replete with the sticky phlegm of a newly-hurled egg, I trotted through the doorway with its coarse, heavy steel doors and into the corridor, into the "Adams" wing of the building. I don't think I'll ever know exactly what distinguished it from the three other equally urine-stained clusters of classrooms. Finally, my ebullience undiminished, I took my seat, conveniently and cheerfully demarcated by a sticker-bedecked name tag. In retrospect, not savoring that beatific moment was my greatest mistake.

I was awoken from my trance by a voice from behind. I turned, and a pale, blond-haired boy of Irish stock, not much taller than I, met my inquisitive stare. I remembered him well: Joseph Crasco, a boy I called my best friend the year before. He seemed more or less the same to me, having not seen anything of him for some time; save for a difference in height and, in retrospect, an expression with the faintest touch of the sullen, nothing was amiss. Eager to find out what his summer was like, I broke the ice.

"Hey!" Warm and eager, amenable as possible.

"Hey." Reserved and cool, palpably taken aback.

"Don't you just love going back to school? I missed this place all summer. I mean, there was no one to talk to or anything. You know?" Grasping for conversation.

"Man, I hate going back to school." Authoritatively curt.

"But why? Isn't it nice to learn and play? I heard we're going to learn *cursive* this year!" Naïve misinterpretation and assertion to the contrary.

"No. That's stupid." Unexpected thrust towards the ugly.

"But I like it!" Ineffectual endeavor to parry.

A pause ensued. A change, a gentle lifting of the corners of the notably sullen mouth, a glint in the eye, the glint of a hunter with a fat deer between the crosshairs of his scope. And words:

"So? You *nerd*! You're *gay*! Hey everybody..."

And so on.

*Game, set, and match.*

It had happened. Despite its crude expression, an awkward mass of sentence fragments and useless contractions framed in thoroughly uninspiring monosyllables, it had its desired effect. I had been shamed, not from any particular fault of my own, save my ignorant honesty, and I showed it. Crimson rushed to my face as eyes, hundreds of accusing eyes, piercing my every defense, laying me bare, lacerated me. The lemon juice of malevolent laughter, spiteful laughter, laughter not entirely understood by the eyes but pressing in its urgency, rising in an acrid cacophony, burned and stung my wounded pride.



A tightness in the back of my throat, a gnawing dryness in my eyes, and on my very first day of second grade, even before the arrival of the teacher, the start of classes, and all the loyally-awaited fun, I burst into tears: tears of rage, tears of pain, tears of betrayal...

A little boy, a skittish, shy, skinny little boy, runs down the hallways of the now-hated "Adams" wing. He clatters to a halt outside the filthy orange door with repulsive caricatures of happy, smiling cartoon boys on it. Although his legs are crossed in agony and the worst seems imminent, he freezes in hesitation. Would they be in there, waiting? It had happened before: the bruises were still obvious and distinct from the fading multitude on his shins and back. But he wasn't going to do *it* again. He had done it once before, in class, fearing the same, and same scornful laughter and shame, the warm wetness running down his leg...he had learned his lesson. Running inside, he is relieved to see his salvation. The stale, reeking feculence still permeates the air and unspeakable profanities still adorn the walls, but he may share his misery alone.

The deed done, he is in no hurry to return to class. Why bother? The room that to him once smelt of fresh pencil shavings and new paper now holds no joy; stagnation of mind and work is the watchword of his well-meaning but aged crone of a teacher. He leans against a piece of undefiled wall, and, to his surprise, new tears come.

Tears for his friends, gone from his side.

Tears for his body, bruised from recess "accidents" that never seem as accidental as the innocent perpetrator protests to the teacher supervising.

Tears for his mind, his ultimate source of ridicule, that which makes him unique, a target marked for forced conformity by his classmates.

Tears for his teacher, helpless, frail, unsuited to work with such hellions.

Tears for his vulnerability, the antecedent to his emotional armor.

Tears for his loneliness, the result of his reclusion and distrust.

In that stolen five minutes, solace in the grim, dirty reality of the public school system, he holds vigil for that clear, crisp autumn morning, with all but the most literal, tangible vows of perfection, when all was right with the world and human beings were to be loved and trusted without question.

I am and always will be that boy.

-Anonymous



# Of Birds and Words

There are two twins who create.  
 One sits in a house by the sea, twirling  
 a pen. Her twin wanders through a distant  
 garden, waiting. They say of the woman's  
 twin "she is creating birds." Inspiration comes  
 on soft-shod feet to the woman's twin, and she  
 crouches in the still grass. Out of the air a single  
 blue-green feather is carefully created in her palm,  
 summoned by her mind alone. With all the deliberate care of an  
 artist she creates more feathers, some thin, some long, all in black overlaid by gleaming  
 green-blue; she binds them with sinew and skin, summoning blood and flesh into being.  
 At last all seems done, but the bird is lifeless. A frown crosses her face like  
 disappearance of the sun, broken, lifeless perfection, nothing more than  
 a craftsman's parts. Then, suddenly, she smiles, and draws forth  
 one final thing. A fragile heartbeat pulses hesitantly against her palm,  
*thu-thu, thu-thu*, and the bird lives. All through the  
 creating there is complete silence, except for  
 the distant scratching of a pen.

It stops.

The woman's twin rises stiffly  
 from the ground, gently placing the new  
 bird on her shoulder. She walks briskly towards  
 a man entering the garden, ignoring the slight  
 pinch of the bird's claws. Inside the house the woman  
 herself puts down her pen at the growl of a car in the  
 driveway. The woman's twin greets the familiar man, newly arrived  
 and waiting. She draws an older bird from an open pocket  
 and places it in his hand. He examines it carefully. His hand  
 is faintly visible through the bird, and the bird is as light as air;  
 frowning he seems to say, 'It's not real enough. You must let it go.' And  
 he flings it over his left shoulder. She gives him the newest bird, and  
 his eyes light up. He closes them, and soon little imperfections within the bird  
 are chiseled down or replaced, until none remains to mar the bird's beauty. He  
 hands it back to her, ignoring a cheep of protest, and they exchange a smile. Back  
 inside the house, the woman's husband comes in the door. The woman herself pauses,  
 and in her twin's world the garden fades. Now both twins stand  
 side by side in the house for an impossible instant,  
 and then melt into one. The writer goes to greet her  
 husband, enthusiastically waving a pile a paper covered  
 with endless neat rows of her handwriting. Within  
 the pile may be one story alive enough that  
 a careful reader can almost hear the  
 fragile beat of its heart, a story  
 real enough to fly.

Jane  
 Newbold, *Λ*



The deeds of bold Beowulf, as everyone knows,  
Were mighty and manly, and macho and grand.  
The glorious Geat got a place with posterity  
By engaging gross Grendel and detaching his hand.  
Soon after this came the pugnacious parent,  
Eager to avenge her son's sudden demise.  
The hero pursued her to far underwater,  
Found a sword there to kill her, and so she too dies.  
The execrable ogre was thus ended with ease  
And the monstrous mother soon followed her son.  
This was the tale that was told through the ages;  
But not quite so simply was history won.  
Firstly, the appendage the Geat apprehended  
Was no arm at all, but only a sleeve.  
The brute was unharmed, and not yet un-armed;  
He battled with Beowulf, and then took his leave.  
But the ripping of raiment is not so redoubtable  
As the lopping of limbs from a fiendish foe  
Since men and not monsters keep records and stories  
Truth is theirs for the making; and they made it so.  
And not only in this was the truth turned and twisted  
For one devil dined on the Danes, and not two.  
Grendel, you see, in the best Bates tradition  
Donned the dress of his dam, as he quite liked to do.  
This cruelly confounded the courageous colossus,  
The pride of his people, the pillar of might,  
For though he had proven his prowess and power  
He was, all agreed, not terribly bright.  
That cross-dressing creature, the Oedipal evil,  
Sadly in need of professional aid,  
Snatched up a last Danish to snack on soon after  
And bring out brave Beowulf, then ran from the raid.  
Now once again the fairy-tale fails us,  
The dastardly bastard did not dive in a lake.  
That last epic battle was fought in a puddle  
Where was finally finished the fell reprobate.  
The savior sought to skewer the scoundrel  
(His sword was much sharper, you see, than his wit)  
But here he failed; the fiend was fleeter  
And rushed on, regardless, through hit after hit.  
But the hell-scourge was scuttling to that fated puddle,  
He died – not by a sword that Beowulf found –  
Instead, the vain villain came to the water,  
Tripped on his skirts, went down – and he drowned.  
And so ended Grendel, the bender of genders,  
And so brainless Beowulf got glory and fame.  
Which just serves to show, for all such offenders:  
If you must eat Danes, don't go dressed as a dame.

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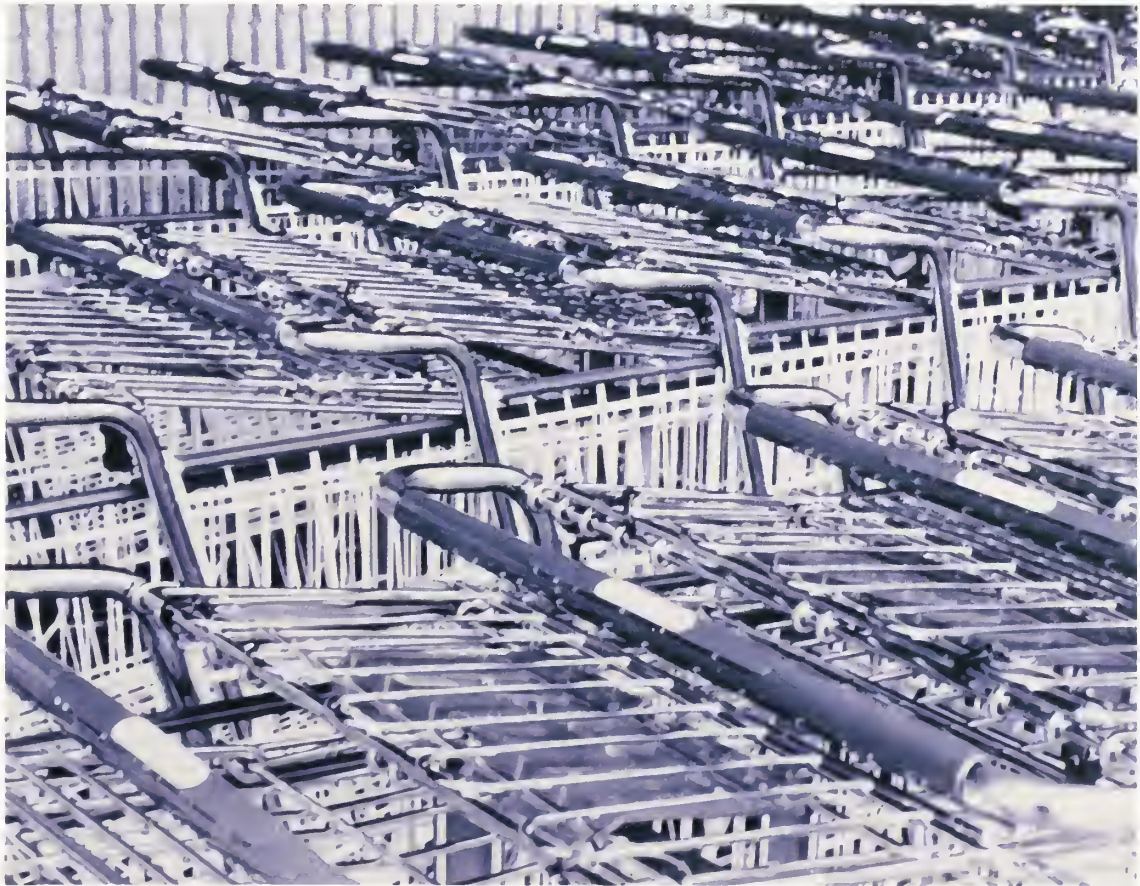
-Ariane Williams II

# My Commute

"how many items of note have I lost walking up these Copley steps?"  
 watching the homeless guy on the landing playing clarinet  
 he should be an island of calm but he is just like the rest of the rushing masses  
 and in thinking about this,  
 and paying too much attention to my scarf  
 dancing up the train-station steps as it does  
 every day  
 I forget to remind myself to be in pain  
 "you can avoid the sight of your watch until it's possible to rush"  
 people will be sitting on these cold wood benches soon  
 warm splinter benches  
 speaking in Spanish fanning themselves  
 wearing sunglasses and carrying bags of laundry  
 tapered-pant-tight-shirt-studded-belt emo kids walk by  
 on their way to their used-record-store jobs  
 I could watch them, pretending to watch for the bus  
 pretending to want to get home but I just need a place to rush to,  
 somewhere else  
 it's 10:35 p.m.  
 the train doors close and force me to watch my own reflection so I look up  
 and down and down the train and at everyone until I get back to the window  
 and want to look out it  
 but not feel vain  
 walk down the hallway and watch all the  
 baggy-pant-band-shirt-button-bag-strap-pant-hornrimmed-glasses kids  
 go to Latin class a grade below  
 but for now sit in the café  
 forget them for the moment  
 and replace them with tea cups, tea pots, and sunlight, and coffee and  
 stare at cars  
 that don't really have a destination but are just there for us  
 to watch and go to each place with just one purpose:  
 you don't have to understand my reasons  
 you can find your own  
 I could not be hungry for once, not fill that void  
 Of time of space of something to do  
 and of feeling  
 Everyday there is a flock of  
 young urban professionals  
 they crowd and run to the bus  
 I can cheat and cut in line and pretend it's a game  
 and write with the paper facing my neighbor,  
 as if I'll look up at them at the end of this sentence with expectant eyes  
 asking for approval  
 scan over them, they are as confused as I am  
 looking worried, not really reading their books or magazines,  
 look out the window,

or trying to sleep because, in truth, they cannot concentrate on anything  
but avoiding connection  
he is stroking the band of her hand with his forefinger  
then two  
she is trying to read  
no smile but she looks with blank repellent  
he wants to stroke her leg or talk over fluorescent candlelight  
but he's pretending to read her magazine  
instead of allowing discontent  
he does not care about People or their dresses, or their Award Shows  
he's faking it and they're faking it  
but it's not wrong  
and it's not tense  
because we owe each other nothing when we are closed  
we owe each other nothing

-Tracy Fidelman, III





**O** The alarm clock rings and my dreams shatter.  
 I swear my eyelids have gotten fatter.  
 I throw myself from my bed,  
 My neck barely supporting my head.  
**n** I brush my teeth, my hair, plunge into clothes,  
 And scratch my big Jewish nose.  
 "C'mon Amanda, it's seven-twenty-eight!  
 Get your butt out here, we're gonna be late!"  
**e** My sister screams, pursing her lips.  
 "Or else we'll surely get tardy slips!"  
 The ride to school is quickly spent,  
 As the darts and turns become more turbulent.  
 My father flips on eight-eight-point-one.  
 The station of country, techno, and folk all in one.  
 Out-of-tune voices flood through the car,  
 God, please let school be not too far!  
**M** My hair matted, my complexion gray,  
 All eyes look sunk this awful day.  
 Homeroom commences, now I must read:  
 Lincoln, Civil War, the slaves are freed!  
 First period is that big essay test,  
**O** My pen won't give my hand a rest.  
 The following two classes pass by in a sweep;  
 One is fascinating, the other elicits sleep.  
 I sprint to a bathroom (which could be cleaner)  
 In order to avoid a misdemeanor.  
**n** I reach my study, reluctant to work at all,  
 Inevitably I sleep, dreading the bell's next call.  
 The next two periods I pass taking notes,  
 Scribbling, erasing until the page almost chokes.  
**d** Finally the longest forty-five minutes are here,  
 The clock ticks, but still mocks in my ear,  
 Your aches and groans are not yet finished,  
 You have a whole sixteen seconds until stress is diminished.  
 I wait out those seconds as if ascending from water to air . . .  
**a** Brrring! Finally I have neither a wish nor a care!  
 I immediately run to my locker then my own door,  
 Where school can't order me any more.  
 But am I really content there, in my own space?  
**y** Or will those horrid steps soon be retraced?  
 That answer came at the next rising sun,  
 When my alarm shook me, and Tuesday had just begun.

The Beginning.

Amanda Shapiro, II





**LOUD**

**COWS** and

*Summer Nights*

"Evan?"

"Yeah."

"You asleep?"

"Does it sound like it?"

"I can't fall asleep."

"It's the cows. They're too loud."

"We're on the beach you freak. There aren't any cows for like five miles."

"Well, all the same."

"You wanna watch TV?"

"It's the middle of the night in Rhode Island, we don't have cable, and the VCR is broken."

"And whose fault is that?"

"Just go to sleep."

"You!"

"I wasn't the one complaining about being awake."

"Wanna go play on the tree swing?"

"We'll get eaten alive outside at night."

"We got bugspray."

"Shut. Up."

"You."

"All right, heh."

"Seriously though. I can't take this. It's too dark...and too quiet. Remember when those college kids rented the house behind us? That was good, heh, they were nice and loud at night."

"They also left beer bottles in the bushes, drove all over our lawn, and made the dog go nuts."

"Fouche liked them. They played Frisbee with him."

"Yeah, until they got him nice and wound up, got sick of him, and sent him back our way."

"Want some ice cream?"

"I guess. If it means you'll leave the room for a minute. Ah, Jesus! What'd ya do that for?!?"

"I told you it's too dark here. I couldn't see the door. Anyway, were you planning on eating your ice cream in the dark?"

"Well, a little warning would have been nice."

"Whatever. I'll be right back."

"Don't hurry."

.....

"Thanks, but where's the chocolate sauce?"

"You didn't ask! You're so aggravating!!!"

"Nah, that's fine, I was just kidding."

"I hate you."

.....

"You done yet?"

"Yeah."



"So can I turn out the light?"

"I suppose."

"G'night."

"Night."

.....

"Evan?"

"What?!"

"I just wanted to tell you, you're not the worst brother ever."

"Yeah, I know. But thanks."

"Aren't you gonna tell me I'm not so bad either."

"Sure."

"Sure what?"

"Sure you're not so bad. I mean, I guess there could always be worse."

"Okay, you could be easier to be around too ya know"

"Look, I don't mind you. Really. It's just that I'm gonna strangle you if you don't go to sleep."

"You're so agitated!"

"I'm so tired!"

"Sorry. Good night."

"G'night."

.....

"Why are you humming?"

"I can't fall asleep."

"Count sheep or something."

"I hate sheep."

"Llamas then."

"Can llamas jump over fences?"

silence

"You wanna go down to the beach?"

"It's too cold out."

"So bundle up."

"I'm tired."

"You wanna play monopoly?"

"Thanks, but no thanks."

"How about the states game? You know what I'm talking about? You say a state, then the next person says one beginning with the last letter of —"

"For the love of God! Would you get some meds for your friggin' insomnia?!"

"All right, all right. Sorry. I'll shut up."

.....

"Allegra?"

silence

"You awake?"

more silence

"That's so not fair."

Allegra Timperi, II







# *Rapid Transit*

"Ruggles Station. Change here for the commuter rail."

The conductor's voice scratched over the aging intercom, loud but barely discernible for the static. It heralded an approaching blur of orange which, when it had slowed and revealed the shape of a train, prompted a slew of commuters to rise in unison, gather their briefcases and backpacks and shopping bags, and march forward into its open doors.

Among this variegated mass of humanity was a solitary girl, tall but not atypically so, thin but no thinner than the next calorie-conscious adolescent, passably attractive but certainly not beautiful. A hefty black bag hung from her shoulder. She carried a folded newspaper in one hand and a small cup of coffee in the other. Her nondescript facial expression masked a smoldering frustration at what the rain had done to her hair, at the fact that she was nursing her second cold in many months, and at the state of the world in general. She sipped her still-too-hot coffee in hopes that the beverage would infuse her with an unreasonable euphoria, but to no avail.

A large woman in a shapeless dress who had been hanging from a pole slipped into a seat, and an even larger man did the same. The girl, seemingly but not actually oblivious to her surroundings, slunk in between them and buried her face in the newspaper, every bit the inadvertent ice princess. The United States was still mulling an invasion of Iraq. The Red Sox had lost; the Patriots had won. Scientists had discovered that sheep had better facial recognition than previously believed. Tomorrow's weather was predicted to be wet and drizzly early, then rapidly clearing, with a mix of sun and clouds by afternoon.

Across the aisle a mother and her little boy, no older than three, sat side by side and read matching books in Chinese. Hers looked serious and scholarly, the pages full of intricate characters. His was bright and colorful, with pictures of trees and elephants, and a few intricate characters as well. At Roxbury Crossing an older man, who walked with the aid of a cane and covered his baldness with a beat-up Navy cap, boarded. The young Chinese mother immediately rose to offer him her seat. He stubbornly refused to take it, and when she had realized that her kindness was futile, she sank down next to her child and reopened her book. The elderly man, fighting fiercely to prevent his frail frame from swaying with the movement of the train, studied the child, and, at length, attempted to start a conversation.

"Hello," he said, waving with a hand he had temporarily freed from its iron grip on the nearby pole.

The child shot him a look of confusion.

The man thought for a minute, and then tried again.

"Nee-how," he spat out slowly.

The child looked at him again, smiled quizzically, and turned back to his trees and elephants.

"Stonybrook," came the muffled voice over the intercom. The girl's coffee cup was at this point half-empty.

The older man walked slowly towards the doors, carrying himself with supreme dignity.

The child saw him inching away.

"Goodbye!" he shouted suddenly, in a rich, accented voice. He waved at the man, who turned, smiled broadly, returned the wave, and stepped slowly out onto the dusty gray platform.

Just as the doors were about to close behind him, a wet, black nose poked through them. The nose was soon followed by a large dog, which was in turn followed by a young man sporting dreadlocks and holding a leash. He staked out a place in the corner for himself and his canine companion. The two were soon surrounded by a clutch of preteen girls, who scratched the dog's head, stroked his tail, and peppered his owner with questions. The patient beast rested his head on the floor and enjoyed the attention. His master twirled one of his dreads around his finger and did the same.

"Forest Hills Station. Change here for the Commuter Rail and bus connections. Be sure to take all bags and parcels with you when you exit the train. Last stop, Forest Hills Station," the conductor announced with a tone of completion in her voice.

Once again the commuters rose in unison. Feeling a tug on his leash, the dog got up and navigated out of his corner, leaving a puddle of drool on the floor behind him. Closing her book, the young mother clasped her son's hand, and both stood. The solitary girl took her newspaper and now empty coffee cup in hand and prepared to rise as well. She fished a tissue from her pocket and muffled a sneeze.

"Bless you," said the large man still wedged in beside her. Both joined the stage towards the doors. The girl had quite suddenly and unexpectedly found her long-sought, unreasonable euphoria. She was grinning now just as fully as she had been weeping when she boarded the train, though none of her fellow riders was any the wiser.

*Erin Durkin, II*







THE MUSIC STARTS  
AND THE ACCORDION  
BEGINS  
TO PLAY

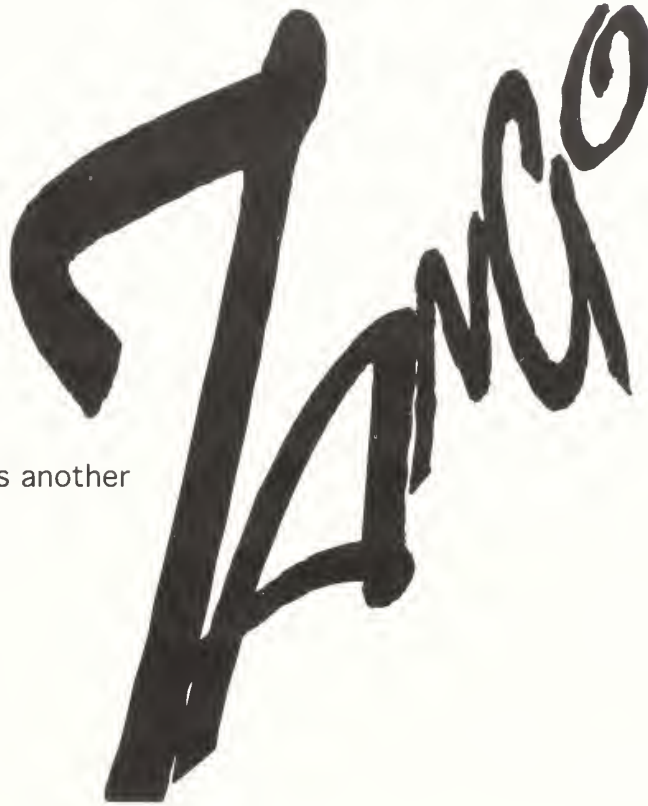
they join  
*they are not dancing*  
he moves  
*they are not dancing*  
they do STEPS  
*they are not dancing*  
the music STOPS

*they are not dancing*

he leaves her abandoned  
but patience prevails as another  
HAND picks her up

THE MUSIC STARTS

another man  
LEADS her willingly  
he dances behind her  
she does not see him  
she does not see his face  
she only knows his dance  
*the music continues*  
*sweet whimsical passion*  
it takes two to tango  
it takes two to love  
it takes two to truly  
*dance*



Emilia Zambrano, II

# The End of the LINE

It was a Monday evening in the middle of July. Jared, Roger, and I were making plans for the next day in the usual way one makes plans when the heat has melted all urgency, transforming it into the humidity that falls from one's brow at the slightest physical exertion.

I reached Forest Hills the next day a little late because my boss had been stuck in traffic. Roger and Jared were there already. Roger clapped his hands.

"So, what should we do?"

Jared and I shrugged.

"Something different," I suggested in a tone that sounded as though I had actually answered his question.

Roger gestured toward the Prudential, very visible against the bright blue sky of summer, and downtown in general. "I vote something in that direction."

"Sure."

"Okay."

Jared started walking toward the buildings in the distance, taking Roger's "vote" seriously. I shrugged and laughed as Roger frantically revised his previous statement. "I meant by train!"

Laughing in spite of, or maybe because of, our slow start, we made our way to the window and bought tokens.

It was cooler on the platform, and, although summer did not relinquish its hold on our minds, talk began to flow more quickly. We compared crazy bosses, discussed movies we had seen, and regaled each other with odd encounters. Along with urgency, summer had removed the need for philosophizing and analyzing, leaving us to hop, skip, and jump from topic to topic - using meaningless conversations as steppingstones to cross the river of knowledge without getting our feet wet.

The talk continued until Ruggles, when Roger tried to bring our meandering minds back to the present.

"So, where are we going?"

"I've never been to Oak Grove before," I said jokingly, as my eyes wandered over the words at the far end of an MBTA diagram and my mind refused to focus.

"Neither have I." Roger responded in the same tone, once again distracted from making a plan.

"Let's go!" Jared had solved our problem.

"Okay, why not?"

"Wait, you're serious?" Roger hesitated as his body refused to comply to the wanderlust nature that consumed his mind.

"Why not?" I repeated, liking the idea more and more; it was something different, something new.

The unfocusing spell of the heat finally overcame Roger's resistance. He grinned. "All right, let's see what's at the end of the line."

Without realizing it, the three of us had set out that day on a quest to find an answer. The summer had dulled our minds, but accident and instinct had led us on. "What's at the end of the line?" is only a step away from "What's the meaning of life?"

As the train continued from station to station, we watched people in various stages of the Summer mentality. There were kids who looked as if they would never return from wandering the wastelands of daytime TV or playing pick-up games of basketball. We observed mothers who craved the sanity fall would provide, construction workers tired of the heat but dreading the cold to come, and business people who barely acknowledged the heat and the mindlessness it carried.

Finally we reached Oak Grove, our destination, the final stop of our summer adventure, the end of the line. The depressing conclusion to our exciting adventure: What's at the end of the line? Parking lots and a Dunkin Donuts.

-Genevieve Shattow, I



# For Daedalus

One day you squinted the sky and said  
 "Look, son, at the clouds  
 those floating wisps  
 draw all human eyes to them.  
 Don't you want to embrace them  
 And feel their breathy nothingness  
 Encompass you?  
 What, son, is heaven  
 If not that?"  
 And so I raised my head as well  
 And struggled to find the same  
 But saw instead of Elysia  
 Inconsistent nothingness.  
 "Yes, father," I said heavily,  
 "I should dream of nothing more  
 than to stroke my fingers through their hair  
 and kiss their lightness  
 as one would kiss the wings  
 of cherubs."  
 And our gazes dropped  
 Back to the ground  
 And for another day again  
 You loved me as your own.

It was not long before I saw  
 You staring at the vacant sky  
 "No clouds today," you murmured drily  
 and walked with reluctance  
 and I saw grasped in those wrinkled hands  
 a feather.  
 You did not sleep anymore  
 Your mind chased an eluding dove.  
 Each day I saw another feather  
 And my deepest fears took hold.  
 We should have been happy  
 Had this Earth not been too dull for you  
 In the deadness of the sky  
 You sought new life  
 For me.

Clasping my shoulders merrily  
 You befitted me with my gift.  
 It stank of oil.  
 And pulled heavy my arms to my sides.  
 But your eyes shimmered  
 Under cataracts of age.  
 "See now, my son,  
 my one true hope  
 what greatness I have planned for you?  
 You will be a god, my boy,  
 As you were always meant to be."  
 And so I cried and kissed your cheek  
 And tried hard to smile  
 And I could but think of how my fate  
 Was your toy.

I jumped, father.  
 It was my only choice.  
 I had you at my back,  
 How could I have walked away?  
 And for your moment of my life  
 This life was always yours.  
 I touched your frozen dreams;  
 I passed my hands right through them.  
 Your mocking trophies suspended in nothing  
 Felt as the air.  
 No holiness, no sanctity was passed  
 And I was not a god.  
 The sun beat down  
 With unrelenting rage  
 And everything started to burn.  
 I watched the first feather  
 Slip from me  
 And twirl softly on the wind.  
 I was so high  
 And fell so fast  
 I had not the time to find you below.  
 My dying thoughts were so tired  
 You wanted so much for me to fly  
 Where are you now when I fall?

Bieta Andemariam, II

# How Things Have Changed

I opened the note slowly and with pride. It was, after all, my first note from a boy, and the first time I had ever given in to confessing my feelings to someone other than myself. I remember taking a deep breath and then beginning to read. In the seventh grade, life was supposed to be full of fairytale endings and knights in shining armor. It was supposed to be that era of fantasy and imagination between preteen and teen.

Once the letter was opened and the disorganized alphabet was in plain view, I still sat there day-dreaming, in a silence that only I could hear in the crowded cafeteria. You wrote sloppily, but the important words were written in bold print so that I would get the message.

DEAR TIARA, you wrote, and then crossed it out. TO TIARA, it then said and went on to explain this action and your feelings behind it. You said that you could see why I had a crush on you, since all of the other girls in our grade had admitted to having the same crush. You said that I was too ugly for you to be seen with in public, since you only liked to be seen with smart, pretty girls and would date none other. I guessed that this was an important message because the words *ugly*, *smart*, and *pretty* were bolded; the one thing I was, and the two things I was not.

You said that you could never like a girl like me, that you would never like a girl like me, so I ought to just give up...and leave you alone. The bold word *never* stood out to me as if it were branded on my eyelids, as if it would haunt me in my dreams and never go away.

So there I was, a princess whose knight in shining armor had slain the fire-breathing dragon that protected her heart, but in doing so had likewise wounded her and left her there to wallow in pain and sit crestfallen -- in the cafeteria.

There was a loud noise and the whole room erupted in laughter. I sat there confused, feeling hurt and embarrassed. The lunch lady who stopped serving pizza long enough to flash a smirk my way, knew. The girls at my table who choked on their milk while chuckling knew. My English teacher who giggled as he said hello to me in the hallway knew. The bus driver who smiled widely at me as I showed her my pass knew. And my mother who knocked on my door and waited patiently in between my sobs knew.

That day marked the trip that instigated my fall into a deep depression. A year later a rosy cheeked counselor smiled at me from behind a clipboard and told me that I was bipolar. A year after that a soft voice at the other end of my telephone line suggested that I might be manic-depressive. Neither wanted to believe that I was ugly, that I was stupid, and that after five years I was still suffering from a crush that crushed me.

But today I wake up differently. I wake up changed. I used to look in the mirror and loathe the person who stared back at me. I wanted to make her die. I tried to make her die. Then something changed. I began to talk more, to smile more, to laugh more. And just when I thought I was completely over you, I received another note. DEAR TIARA, it read, I AM SORRY FOR ALL THAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU...Oh how things have changed.

*Tiara Sims, II*

# Musings of a Morbid Mind

Quietly (or at least she hoped it was quietly, it was hard to tell over the pounding in her head) she crept up the stairs to her bedroom. On entering her room she stubbed her toe and had to struggle to keep from lashing out at the offending corner with a string of obscenities. Now was not the time to be discovered by drowsy parents. Quickly she slipped off her heels with a mental sign of relief. This sudden release from pain brought exhaustion – kept at bay by the searing of her heels. She tore off her dress and groped around for the first T-shirt her hands came across. She slipped into her unmade bed, and closed her eyes...and found that not only was her head pounding but her heart racing. Desperate for sleep she took deep breaths to calm herself...and found herself drifting into a death-like slumber...

An hour? It seemed a year had passed when she found herself awake. Turning her eyes to the window she found the sky was not the bright gleam of morning she hoped for but the infuriating purple gray of almost-dawn. She rolled over and waited for sleep to come.

And it did come... and it seemed long before her eyes opened to find again the same muted sky.

Again she closed her eyes tightly and awaited sleep. And again after what seemed an eternity she was awake, and again it was still dark.

Now she began to worry. Why isn't it morning? And her mind – the same mind that her friends had called quirky and her younger sister had called insane, the same mind that was notorious for turning the squeaks of the radiator into the footsteps of a murderer, the same mind that most psychologists would call neurotic or even compulsive – stumbled upon a thought that was most decidedly morbid.

What if...what if she had died in the middle of the night...and now...this...now this was...hell? ...And she was destined to spend eternity waiting in desperation for morning?

She chuckled quietly in spite of her worry. Her exhausted brain was really sending her crazy messages this time. And yet...there was this nagging ache in her stomach, a pit of fear, which she could not shake off even as she fell back into sleep...

Awaken to find it was still night...sleep...night...sleep...again...again...

A mind can only take so much torment. Turning on her bedside lamp she found her favorite book lying on the table where she always kept it – just in case.

When the entire book was finished and she found the light outside her window still unchanged, the drastic thought of before tiptoed out from recesses of her mind.

No...she would not allow it to be true...in desperation she tried to forget the thought, mentally shoving the offensive idea out of her head. But the fear and anxiety remained.

She groped for another book on her table. Any thing to get her mind far, far



away from the thoughts, and the night, and the room, and herself.

She devoured book after book, and when she had finished them all and it was still dark, she found paper and a pen and began to write her own. Occupation kept eternity at bay.

And when the paper ran out, she reached out with her pen and her mind for the nearest surface on which to continue her story - the wall.

In the eerie glow of her lamps and the interminable purple of the sky she wrote until all four walls except for a small patch were covered in tiny script. Excitement pulsed through her. The End! Yet right as she prepared to write the final word she wavered. If she finished this story what would be left? The answer struck her: eternity. Desperation. She could not finish it. Unfinished there would always be the faint hope that the purple sky would finally lighten and that the sun would rise. No, she would not write the word. She would not accept that this was truly the end.

The \_\_\_\_\_

Lee Glandorf, III



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